



Seattle's Comprehensive Plan Update

ISSUE PAPER #2: Improving Urban Village Growth Monitoring (Policy L52)

1. Problem Statement

The Comprehensive Plan, under Land Use policy L52 (attached), recommends a “special review procedure” under which the City would work with communities where growth is too fast or too slow. However, the outcomes expected from that process are not identified.

Three changes to the monitoring process called for under policy L52 are being considered:

- ◆ Clarifying the purpose of monitoring growth in urban centers and villages as opposed to other parts of the City, and the growth thresholds that will trigger special review.
- ◆ Identifying the relative priority to be given to areas that are exceeding or lagging expectations about growth, compared to other city priorities.
- ◆ Spelling out the expected outcomes of growth monitoring processes.

2. Background

As part of the 1994 Comprehensive Plan, the City identified 38 urban centers and villages as areas where growth was to be encouraged, and infrastructure improvements would be focused. Each of these urban villages has a 20-year growth target, representing the amount of growth that the neighborhood and City would plan to accommodate over twenty years. The City uses these urban village-specific growth targets to identify whether an area is growing too fast or growing too slow under Policy L52.

The special review process called for by Policy L52 could address a number of goals:

- ◆ To ensure that infrastructure will be available to meet needs resulting from growth. This is also addressed by the State's requirement that the Comprehensive Plan identify the capacity of existing infrastructure and identify strategies to address deficiencies that could result from planned growth.
- ◆ To provide additional amenities to areas where growth has occurred. This has been addressed, in part, through the neighborhood plan implementation process, which has worked to implement projects called for in neighborhood plans.
- ◆ Focus attention to areas where growth is not occurring. The City has used a number of different tools to encourage growth where it is desired, but a cohesive strategy to jump-start growth in slower growing urban villages has not been created.

- ◆ Provide an opportunity for dialogue between affected communities and the City about the impacts and rate of growth.

Policy L52 is not clear about the desired outcomes of the City's growth monitoring process. In part, this is because it was expected that each neighborhood would have a different desired approach for dealing with unplanned growth. However, a lack of clear expectations has resulted in a lack of focus during meetings with neighborhoods. Unclear expected outcomes have also resulted in a lack of implementation tools for any strategies that come out of those meetings.

How the City has Implemented Policy L52

The City has tracked growth in urban villages and instituted "special review procedures" in two different ways over the last few years.

The City met with a number of communities where growth has occurred at rates faster than normal between 2000 and 2002. Because those meetings occurred within two years of the adoption of neighborhood plans, the meetings generally did not identify strategies that had not already been identified in neighborhood plans. In the absence of a particular source of funding or particular program to be targeted to implement those projects identified by the City and communities identified in the growth monitoring process, the growth monitoring process as put into practice proved redundant to the neighborhood plan implementation process.

More effective, perhaps, has been using monitoring data in identifying areas where specific attention by city departments may be warranted. For example, the Office of Housing used information about areas that had low growth rates to identify areas where the multifamily housing tax exemption program should be implemented. In 2003, Mayor Nickels proposed spending unanticipated REET (real estate excise tax) funds to provide infrastructure improvements in four neighborhoods that have had significant growth toward their 20-year growth targets over the last ten years. These projects were identified based on neighborhood plans and neighborhood-identified projects.

3. Options

Urban villages are the areas in the City where both growth and City investment are to be targeted. Growth that isn't accompanied by attention to the impacts of that growth on the existing infrastructure and services can sometimes result in strains on the infrastructure and a reduced quality of life for both existing and new residents and employees. Among the potential outcomes for a growth monitoring process could be:

- ◆ City and community collaboration to review and, if required, update, adopted neighborhood plans with a focus on ensuring that the plans address identifiable impacts resulting from growth, or the impediments to growth as appropriate.
- ◆ Goals and expectations for the different types of improvements expected over time in a mature urban village.
- ◆ Identification of specific capital improvements or funds that could be targeted to fast or slow-growing areas to address impacts or impediments.
- ◆ Development of new programs that are designed to work with communities on longer-range projects related to growth.

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- ◆ Nothing, if the community is comfortable with the rate of growth that they are experiencing.

Except for the last, each of these options would be most effective with a dedicated pot of funds or identified funding sources that could be directed to villages undergoing review.

Attachment I

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICIES WHICH CALL FOR MONITORING GROWTH IN URBAN VILLAGES

Land Use Element

L17 Establish clearly defined boundaries for centers and urban villages that reflect existing development patterns, functional characteristics of the area and recognized neighborhood boundaries. Use boundaries to guide development activity, monitor growth and other development conditions, and evaluate performance towards meeting neighborhood and comprehensive plan goals for services and amenities.

L52 Monitor development activity annually to identify situations where the rate of growth is different from that anticipated by growth targets, either because:

1. it is occurring too rapidly and may be disruptive; or
2. there is insufficient growth to achieve planned conditions in designated villages.

Establish percentage threshold criteria to identify growth conditions over an extended period of time that are unacceptably at variance with growth targets, which indicate the duration over which such variance need exist before a special review process is triggered. Permit as part of the development of neighborhood plans for urban centers and urban villages, adjustment of growth monitoring thresholds.

Initiate the special review procedure to determine an appropriate course of action if conditions identified by these threshold criteria are realized. The procedure should include a review process with the affected community, in areas where the rate of growth varies from growth targets by more than established criteria, to determine whether City or community action to more effectively achieve growth goals is warranted.

Attachment 2

OTHER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICIES WHICH CALL FOR MONITORING

Transportation Element

- T10** Evaluate, against the following mode choice goals, the success of the City's and the region's land use strategies, and transportation systems and programs, in reducing single-occupant vehicle use.

Travel modes for work trips by Seattle residents:

		Year	
	1990	2000 Goal	2010 Goal
Single-occupant car	59%	51%	35%
Non-single-occupant car:			
Carpool	12%	12%	13%
Public Transportation	16%	20%	27%
Bicycle and other	3%	5%	9%
Walk	7%	8%	10%
Work at home	3%	4%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%

- T34** Designate the transit priority network as shown in Transportation Figure 4. Monitor transit speeds and operations along the transit priority network and, where needed, pursue measures to increase transit speeds and reliability, reduce delay, and support demand. Continue to designate other transit classifications through the Seattle Comprehensive Transportation Program.
- T52** Develop methods for evaluating the provision and performance of non-motorized travel facilities. These methods should consider:
- ♦ minimizing delay and discomfort; directness of routes;
 - ♦ continuity of the non-motorized network;
 - ♦ attractiveness of environment;
 - ♦ current and anticipated demand;
 - ♦ barriers to non-motorized transportation, such as terrain, insufficient right-of-way, conflicts with other street uses, lack of sidewalks and paths, and difficult intersections and crossings; and
 - ♦ safety and accessibility for all users, including seniors, children, and persons with disabilities.

These methods should take into account location and surroundings, travel and land use patterns, and environmental constraints. They should be used to monitor the existing facilities, to identify their strengths, deficiencies and potential improvements, and to support development of new and innovative facilities. The methods shall support a process for the allocation of the City's transportation resources, and facilitate the timely implementation of the comprehensive plan policies for non-motorized travel through both neighborhood planning and general transportation system planning.

Capital Facilities Element

F. Consistency and Coordination

As part of the City's CIP process, the City considers whether probable funding will be sufficient to meet the currently identified needs for new or expanded city capital facilities to accommodate planned growth. Should anticipated funding not materialize, or should new needs be identified for which no funding is determined to be probable, the City will reassess the land use element of this Plan to ensure that it is coordinated, and consistent, with this element, and in particular with the six-year finance plan. A review for coordination and consistency between this Element and the Land Use Element will be part of the City's annual budget review and Comprehensive Plan amendment processes.

Human Development Element

HD3I Enhance efforts that support informal monitoring, foster legitimate activities, and give people a sense of ownership and control over their neighborhood.

Attachment 3

CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS ON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MONITORING

Resolution 30152 (Adopted April 3, 2000)

A RESOLUTION approving threshold criteria to identify growth conditions at variance with growth targets in urban villages under Comprehensive Plan Policy [L52].

WHEREAS, the City of Seattle adopted a Comprehensive Plan in 1994; and

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Plan includes policy [L52] calling for the annual monitoring of growth in the City to "identify situations where the rate of growth is different from that anticipated by growth targets, either because: 1) it is occurring too rapidly and may be disruptive; or 2) there is insufficient growth to achieve planned conditions in designated villages"; and

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Plan calls for the development of "percentage threshold criteria to identify growth conditions over an extended period of time that are unacceptably at variance with growth targets, which indicate the duration over which such variance need exist before a special review process is triggered;" and

WHEREAS, the Strategic Planning Office has developed such criteria in consultation with stakeholder groups;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE, THE MAYOR CONCURRING, THAT:

The City Council approves the threshold criteria attached hereto as Exhibit A for undertaking special review of urban village growth with affected communities.

Exhibit A: Threshold Criteria to Identify Growth Conditions unacceptably at variance with growth targets.

Consider the following as base criteria to identify urban villages for special review under Comprehensive Plan policy [L52]:

- a. villages/centers that achieve 50% or more of their 20-year target for household or employment growth within a five-year period; or,
- b. villages/centers that increase their household or employment totals by 25% or more within a five-year period; or,
- c. villages/centers that achieve less than 10% of their household or employment target within a five year period.
- d. With respect to the above criteria, the Strategic Planning Office would also take into account expected future growth, based on the existence of active building permits, that would lead the village or center to exceed or fall below one of the three criteria above.

During the special review, consider the following factors in addition to those included in policy L61:

- a. Community desire to participate in a special review of growth; or,
- b. The existence of on-going City projects intended, at least in part, to address neighborhood concerns about rates of growth.

Resolution 28969 (Adopted August 1, 1994)

A RESOLUTION regarding work programs and resources related to the Comprehensive Plan including: (1) continuing efforts to augment the Plan through work on additional plan elements, a strategic capital investment plan, and a program of neighborhood planning; (2) carrying out actions or studies to amend and/or implement the Plan; and (3) developing and carrying out a program for monitoring and evaluating the Plan...

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Executive is requested to develop a Comprehensive Plan monitoring and evaluation proposal that at a minimum will address the following:

- a. Program for monitoring achievement of Plan goals: Goals or targets such as those for employment and household growth should be reviewed and compared periodically with actual conditions to measure progress in achieving the purposes of the Plan. Also, monitoring and evaluation are necessary to ensure that Plan implementation remains consistent with the Plan's goals.
- b. Performance measures; Performance measures should be developed to monitor implementation program results. Evaluation of the measures should assist in determining how programs should be adjusted to better address Plan goals and policies.
- c. Demographic profile monitoring: Economic, demographic and housing trends should be monitored so that future plans and programs may consider and respond where appropriate to needs resulting from changes in the composition of the population.
- d. Regular reporting: The Executive should propose a recommendation to the Council on the timing and scope of reports on the findings from monitoring and evaluating the Plan. A reporting mechanism should be developed to show whether or not specific policies and strategies are leading to the intended results. The reports should include recommendations on needed amendments to the Plan to improve the success of reaching Plan goals. The recommendation should also specify a role for the Planning Commission in monitoring and evaluation.

Attachment 4

URBAN VILLAGE GROWTH TOWARD ADOPTED 20-YEAR GROWTH TARGETS

	% of Housing Target Achieved 9/94-9/03 (with issued permits)	% of Employment Target Achieved 1995-2001
Urban Centers	40%	44%
1st Hill/Capitol Hill Urban Center	44%	52%
12th Avenue	156%	36%
Capitol Hill	26%	12%
First Hill	23%	63%
Pike/Pine	88%	106%
Downtown Urban Center	41%	45%
Belltown	55%	126%
Chinatown-International District	50%	9%
Commercial Core	82%	67%
Denny Triangle	19%	16%
Pioneer Square	7%	14%
Northgate Urban Center	6%	21%
University Urban Center	45%	45%
University District Northwest	42%	33%
Ravenna	59%	106%
Uptown Urban Center	75%	-15%
Hub Urban Villages	43%	37%
Ballard	71%	2%
Bitter Lake Village	22%	36%
Fremont	40%	48%
Lake City	46%	-3%
North Rainier	12%	-4%
South Lake Union	44%	132%
West Seattle Junction	60%	11%
Residential Urban Villages	54%	No Target
23rd & Union-Jackson	90%	
Admiral	63%	
Aurora-Licton Springs	48%	
Columbia City	11%	
Crown Hill	15%	
Eastlake	122%	
Green Lake	55%	
Greenwood-Phinney Ridge	117%	
Madison-Miller	172%	
MLK @ Holly St	54%	
Morgan Junction	19%	
North Beacon Hill	12%	
Queen Anne	28%	
Rainier Beach	12%	
Roosevelt	18%	
South Park	26%	
Wallingford	239%	
Westwood-Highland Park	18%	
Manufacturing/Industrial Centers		66%
BINMIC	No Target	48%
Duwamish		72%
Outside Centers and Villages	44%	No Target
Total Citywide Change	44%	51%